PYRALID MOTHS IN PROFILE: PART 1 – *SCIOTA ADELPHELLA* (FISCHER VON RÖSLERSTAM)

BERNARD SKINNER

5 Rawlins Close, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 8JS.

Introduction

THIS IS THE FIRST in a series of occasional articles on the British Pyralidae under the general heading *Pyralid moths in profile*. The series is intended to cover species where our knowledge of the status, distribution and immature stages in Britain appears to be inadequate. The series will also cover species where the true status has been distorted by erroneous recording either as a result of misidentification or muddled nomenclature.

Included in the early series will be *Crambus pratella* (L.) (England only); *Crambus verellus* (Zincken); *Udea fulvalis* (Hbn.); *Salebriopsis albicilla* (H.-S.); and *Acrobasis tumidana* (D.&S.). Details of unpublished records for any of these species will be gratefully received and acknowledged on publication.

Profile no. 1 – *Sciota adelphella* (Fischer von Röslerstam)

Past history and present status

This species was first recognised in Britain as distinct from *Sciota hostilis* (Stephens) in 1988 (Brotheridge, 1988) and single records were cited from Wiltshire and Essex. An initial response to the discovery brought to light eight further specimens, one from Suffolk and the rest from Kent (Jewess, 1989 and Chalmer-Hunt, 1990).

In 1990 I researched this species visiting or consulting many major museums and private collections, and further investigating all unusual records of *S. hostilis*. In all, fifteen specimens were found to have been taken before 1990. These comprised a single inland record from Wiltshire; the others being mainly from coastal sites in Suffolk, Kent and Essex. There is some supportive evidence that most, if not all, were the result of immigration.

After a two year absence of records a small influx occurred on the south-east coast of Kent in July 1992 and in August a larva, the first and so far the only one reported from Britain, was found feeding on white willow, *Salix alba* at Greatstone, Kent. In 1993 six more specimens were reported from the same general area.

More sightings in 1994 suggested that the species was possibly established in at least four localities, Greatstone, Littlestone, Dymchurch and New Romney.

Similar species

The adult of *adelphella* is similar to *S. hostilis* and *Pempelia formosa* (Haw.). However, *adelphella* has a distinctly brighter orange basal patch and

The British records of *S. adelphella* 1948-1993

6.1948	Hamstreet, Kent	J.M. Chalmers-Hunt	Chalmers-Hunt Coll.
28.6.1957	Lydd, Kent	S. Wakely	Univ. Mus. Cambs.
29.6.1959	Bradwell, Essex	A.J. Dewick	Dewick Coll.
3.8.1963	Dover, Kent	G.H. Youden	Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.)
16.7.1964	Thorpeness, Suffolk	J.M. Chalmers-Hunt	Chalmers-Hunt Coll.
7.7.1970	Dover, Kent	G.H. Youden	Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.)
c. 1975	Dymchurch, Kent	J. Owen	Chalmers-Hunt Coll.
6.7.1976	Newington, Kent	P. Jewess	Jewess Coll.
26.6.1984	Stodmarsh, Kent	J.M. Chalmers-Hunt	Chalmers-Hunt Coll.
21.7.1984	Stodmarsh, Kent	N.F. Heal	Heal Coll.
21.7.1984	Stonelees, Kent	J.M. Chalmers-Hunt	Chalmers-Hunt Coll.
4.7.1985	Murston, Kent	P. Jewess	Jewess Coll.
29.6.1986	Dover, Kent	G.H. Youden	Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.)
15.7.1987	Wroughton, Wilts.	D.J. Brotheridge	Brotheridge Coll.
7.7.1989	Thorpeness, Suffolk	J.L. Fenn	Fenn Coll.
8.7.1992	Greatstone, Kent	B. Banson	Clancy Coll.
8.7.1992	Dungeness, Kent	S. Clancy	Clancy Coll.
10.7.1992	Lydd, Kent	K. Redshaw	Clancy Coll.
15.7.1992	Greatstone, Kent	B. Banson	Clancy Coll.
18.7.1992 (2)	New Romney, Kent	K. Redshaw	Clancy Coll.
23.8.1992 (L)	Greatstone, Kent	B. Skinner	Skinner Coll.
24.5.1993	Dungeness, Kent	M. Parsons	Parsons Coll.
6.6.1993	New Romney, Kent	K. Redshaw	Clancy Coll.
6.1993	New Romney, Kent	K. Redshaw	Redshaw pers. comm.
8.6.1993	Densole, Kent	A. Rouse	Rouse Coll.
26.6.1993	Dymchurch, Kent	J. Owen	Owen Coll.
3.7.1993	Dymchurch, Kent	J. Owen	Owen Coll.

an inwardly concave antemedian line absent in *hostilis*. The two discal spots are not united as is the case in *P. formosa*. *Sciota hostilis* and *S. adelphella* are illustrated in Figure 7, Plate D.

Life history

Captive pairing of wild caught British specimens have been obtained, and the complete life history observed. In captivity the small, pale straw coloured eggs are laid singly or in small batches on the underside of the leaf either side of the midrib and hatch in six to seven days.

The full grown larva measures 19mm and is yellowish-green with reddish-brown dorsal and ventral stripes. The head is reddish-brown. It would appear to be quite distinct from the dull brownish larva of *hostilis* described by William Buckler (Buckler, 1901). A fully grown larva is illustrated in Figure 8, Plate D. The larva lives inside a transparent, silken tube within a flimsy tent comprised of two or more lightly spun leaves. Several larvae will share a "tent" in captivity and possibly do so in the wild.

After approximately 30 days the larva pupates within a soft papery and opaque cocoon. The typically chestnut-brown pupa is glossy and measures 11-12mm (Fig. 9, Plate D). The pupation site in nature is unknown, but in captivity the larva forms its cocoon on the side of the breeding container. The moth overwinters in the pupal stage.

References

Brotheridge, D.J., Corley, M.F.V., Dewick, A.J., 1988. *Sciota adelphella* (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae) in England. *Entomologist's Gaz.* **39**: 271.

Buckler, W., 1901. *The larvae of the British butterflies and moths.* IX. plate 159, figure 7a.

Chalmers-Hunt, J.M., 1990. *in* The 1989 Annual Exhibition. *Br. J. ent. Nat. Hist.* **3**: 70.

Jewess, P., 1989. Records of *Sciota adelphella* F.v.R. from North Kent. *Entomologist's Rec. J. Var.* **101**: 173.

Eutheia linearis Muls. (Col.: Scydmaenidae) recaptured at Windsor

As long ago as 1935 (*Entomologist's mon. Mag.* **71**: 65) I recorded a single specimen of this rare insect from Windsor, the only one (apparently) known up to now from the locality in spite of all the collecting done there. To enlarge somewhat upon this capture: it was, incidentally, the first beetle taken on my first visit to the area, on 21st May 1934! It occurred under bark on a smallish oak stump, just inside the piece of forest to the south of the road at Highstanding Hill. The specimen is a female and was readily named from Joy (1932, *Pract. Handb. Brit. Beetles* **1**: 479-480) and Fowler (1889, *Col.Brit.Isl.* **3**: 89), but it must be noted that at that period the shorter, more strongly and abruptly clubbed antennae were mistakenly assigned to males in the genus – a point later corrected in the literature.

E. linearis has a different habitat from the closely similar *E. scydmaenoides* Steph., being subcortical instead of saprophilous, and has been accorded Grade 1 Old Forest Indicator status. Most of our specimens were collected under bark of oak logs in Sherwood Forest last century by W.G. Blatch, and it has occurred in the New Forest, but a remarkable recent record from the woods fringing Loch Lomond, Stirlingshire, is seemingly unconfirmed (Hyman & Parsons, 1994, *Rev. Scarce & Threatened Col. Gt. Br.* **2**: 91).

It is of interest, therefore, to report a second find of the species at Windsor, where I took another female under bark of an oak log or branch in a wood-pile in the Great Park, 4.vii.1984 – just half-a-century after the first. The *Eutheia* was almost buried in the outer layers of very fibrous "bast", from which it was extracted with some difficulty. Unaccountably, it appears to have passed at the time as *E. scydmaenoides,* despite the habitat which should have alerted me to its true identity, but a recent overhaul of my material revealed it as undoubted *linearis.* One of the clearest distinctions lies in the fact that while the pronotum is more strongly punctate than the elytra in *scydmaenoides,* the reverse is the case in *linearis,* as Joy (*l.c.supra*) indicates.– A.A. Allen, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London SE7 8QG.